THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No overaged coaches are used in trains running in Eastern, North East Frontier and South Eastern Railways and it is Railways' constant endeavour to provide all amenity fittings in good working condition on coaches before commencement of the journey. In fact, as a result of various measures taken by Railways, passenger complaints relating to upkeep of coaches have reduced significantly over the last two years.

(b) Question does not arise. However, replacement of overaged coaches which are used in other application than passenger trains is a continuous process and new coaches are being added to the fleet every year.

(c) Average age of passenger coaches zonewise is as under:—

(Data as on 31.3.1997)

Railway	Average age
Central	11 yrs.
Eastern	9 yrs.
Northern	9 yrs.
North Eastern	9 yrs.
Northeast Frontier	10 yrs.
Southern	10 yrs.
South Central	11 yrs.
South Eastern	9 yrs.
Western	11 yrs.

Construction of Sambalpur-Talcher Railway line

1182. SHRI NARENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated cost and the time limit for the construction of the Sambalpur-Talcher Railway Line;

(b) whether there has been delay in completing the project; and

(c) if so, the revised estimate of the project and by when it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) The estimated cost of Talchar-Sambalpur line is Rs. 336.68 crores. The line was targetted to be completed in Dec. 95 but was delayed due to constraint of resources. The present anticipated cost is Rs. 360 crores and the expected date of completion is 30-6-98.

Sale of Railway Tickets at a Premium During the Holiday Season

1183. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during holiday season, railway tickets are sold at a premium by some agents in collaboration with railway employees;

(b) what action Railways have taken against such agents and railway employees;

(c) whether it is a fact that vigilance branch of the Railways is inactive in detecting such incidents; and

(d) whether any action has been taken in this regard; if so, the details of the total financial recovery and confiscation of tickets, zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Some cases of unscrupulous elements indulging in malpractices in reservation have come to notice.

(b) to (d) To curb such activities, regular preventive/decoy checks are conducted by the Vigilance and Commercial Organisation of the railways in coordination with RPF/GRP. In 1997-98, 4808 persons were apprehended and were dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Railway Act, 1989. Action was also taken against 646 defaulting staff. The number of transferred ticket cases detected and amount realised

during 1997-98, railway-wise is given as under:—

Railway	Transferred Tickets Detected.	Amount realised (in lakhs)
Central	4884	14.97
Eastern	187	0.90
Northern	1231	4.28
North Eastern	16	0.25
Northeast Frontier	47	0.58
Southern	4681	20.68
South Central	2132	13.08
South Eastern	691	3.02
Western	5226	26.74
Total	19095	84.50

Inquiry Report by CRS on the accident near Firozabad

1184. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), Northern Circle has submitted his Enquiry Report on the railway accident near Firozabad on August 20, 1995;

(b) if so, what are the recommendations made in the Report; and

(c) the details of those being implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Recommendations made by the Commissioner of Railway Safety related, inter alia, to track circuiting; of aspect of loop line stations; recruitment, working and training of switchmen; battery-operated flasher type tail lamps; position of SLR coaches; disposal of dead bodies; maintenance of speed recorders; availability of emergency litting kit box, raising of speed of trains, working of guards; working of safety organisation; and high priority for signalling safety works, etc.

(c) Recommendations of the Commissioner of Railway Safety are in various stages of implementation.

East Coast Railway Zone

1185. SHRI NARENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the East Coast Railway Zone with its head quarters at Bhubaneswar inaugurated in 1996 has become functional; and

(b) if so, the jurisdiction of this zone?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The East Coast Railway Zone has been inaugurated on 8.8.1996. An Officer-on-Special Duty (OSD) has been posted. Some specific activities of Khurda Road Division have been taken over by this Zone with effect from 15.5.1997.

(b) The detailed territorial jurisdiction of this zone has not yet been finalised.

Gauge Conversion in Andhra Pradesh

1186. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are completing any gauge conversion works in Andhra Pradesh in 1997-98;

(b) the details of on-going work in gauge conversion in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) the new gauge conversion works to be taken up in 1998-99; and

(d) full details of funds earmarked for this purpose in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. The gauge conversion of Mahbubnagar-Dronachellam section has been completed in 1997-98